United Nations A/C.4/60/SR.13

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
31 October 2005

Original: English

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 13th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 20 October 2005, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Aliyev ..... (Azerbaijan)

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05-56120 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 32: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (A/59/19/Rev.1)

1. **Mr. Guéhenno** (Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations) said that over the past five years it had been a constant priority for him to deepen the relationship between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Member States, because effective interaction would guarantee the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping operations, peacekeeping being the expression of the collective will of Member States to help societies to make the transition from armed conflict to self-sustaining peace. The Fourth Committee and the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had provided much-valued support and guidance to the Department, while the Department had increased its consultation with troop-contributing countries in order to further the comprehensive reform process initiated by the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations known as the Brahimi report.

2. There had been a surge in the number and scope of United Nations peacekeeping operations over the past four years. There were currently 18 operations, comprising 83,000 troops, police and civilian personnel out of an authorized total capacity of 87,250. That represented a fivefold increase in field personnel since 2000 and an increase of over 10,000 since the previous year, with 23 new countries having contributed either police or troops in the past 18 months.

3. Numbers, however, were only one part of the equation. United Nations peacekeepers were making a wide-ranging qualitative contribution to the resolution of conflicts: they were helping to stabilize fragile peace agreements and assisting in post-conflict political transition processes, such as the elections organized in 2005 in Afghanistan, Burundi, Haiti and Liberia and the forthcoming elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; they were negotiating in volatile environments and conducting comprehensive disarmament, as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti; they were helping in the transition to longer-term peacebuilding in countries where the peacekeeping mandates had been successfully completed, as in Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste; and they were responding to evolving, complex political environments, as in Côte d'Ivoire and Kosovo.

4. In response to the requests of Member States, innovative practices had been introduced in the field and at mission headquarters. New inter-mission cooperation in West Africa, for example, involved consultations between the five Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in the region, a joint early warning initiative, cooperation on cross-border issues and the sharing of expertise and information. New integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration standards had been developed by over 14 United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as well as field mission staff, for operational planning and training purposes. The strategic deployment stocks mechanism continued to be refined in the light of lessons learned and now included a kit to enable the rapid deployment of a mission headquarters at the start of an operation. A comprehensive policy on joint operations and joint mission analysis centres was being developed in conjunction with the new Department of Safety and Security, building on best field practices. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations was supporting numerous simultaneous audits and reviews of mission headquarters and field missions by United Nations oversight bodies.

5. In addition to peacekeeping, the Department was supporting a growing number of other United Nations field activities. It was providing administrative and logistical support to 13 United Nations special political missions and offices around the world that were assisting in the political transition process or providing regional political guidance and support. It was also a service provider to other parts of the United Nations, particularly the Department of Political Affairs. The range of the Department's cooperation with the African Union — political, technical and security — testified to the significance of the relationship between the two in the interests of peace and security in Africa. The Department had offered workshops in command and control, communications systems, doctrine, training and standard operating procedures to enhance the African Union's peacekeeping capacities; and in Darfur, in particular, it was assisting the African Union in mission planning and management and it had run a map exercise to test operational plans. With more resources earmarked even more could be done.

6. Indeed, the Department remained seriously overstretched, as new commitments outstripped the

winding-down of missions. The Department was running the leanest field operations organization in the world in a permanent state of shortfall, and managed to do so only thanks to improved procedures and the dedication and quality of the peacekeeping personnel. Not all of the useful reform recommendations adopted five years earlier, for example the development of a rapid force deployment system, had been implemented, and in some cases implementation had been only partial. In addition, the scope and complexity of current peacekeeping operations had arguably overtaken the Brahimi process; that process had been predicated on launching one large mission a year, whereas in 2004 alone the Department had had to establish four. The number of tasks currently mandated to United Nations peacekeeping operations was 92 and they covered not only security-focused activities such as ceasefire monitoring or disarmament assistance but also broader areas such as support for public order, the protection of civilians and public administration. The more burdens placed on United Nations peacekeeping personnel in the field, the less innovation and quality could reasonably be demanded of them.

7. The overstretching of the Department also undermined its capacity to manage operations effectively, as was borne out by the shameful episode of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeeping personnel, which had seriously compromised the good name of the Organization. The scope and seriousness of the response had demonstrated the impact that cooperation between the Department and Member States could have. The Department was committed to implementing a zero tolerance policy in the matter, and it had been actively investigating and disciplining a number of peacekeepers. Member States should also ensure that mission commanders were held accountable for enforcing standards in the field and countries which contributed troops and police must also take urgent remedial action where necessary. All those involved must get the message across to the peacekeeping personnel.

8. At the 2005 World Summit, the Heads of State and Government had articulated some of the key elements to be pursued in meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century: they had underscored that peacekeeping was a core activity of the United Nations and that it must be able to respond robustly to challenges on the ground. In particular, a rapidly deployable reserve capacity and a strengthened police capacity were needed to reinforce missions in crises. A comprehensive integrated approach to post-conflict countries had been endorsed, as had the deployment of integrated missions in complex situations. It had therefore been decided to establish a peacebuilding commission and a peacebuilding support office by the end of the current year. Ways had been proposed to strengthen peacekeeping partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations, and the Secretary-General had been mandated to initiate reforms in personnel and financial management practices in the Secretariat so as to avoid any instances of abuse by United Nations personnel.

9. In response to the direction the Member States had set for the Organization at the World Summit and in support of the Secretary-General's reform efforts, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations would for the next few years focus on five priorities that reflected the conclusions of the World Summit.

10. The first priority was to look after the people involved. Many of the individuals employed in the field were skilled and committed peacekeeping professionals, often civilians, who risked their lives daily. The Department was highly decentralized. The peacekeeping personnel lacked a professional career structure, and the civilians involved did not benefit either from attractive conditions of service, mobility across the United Nations system and career opportunities, or from basic services such as security provision and training. That reflected a lack of investment which was damaging to leadership. Despite the growing complexity of missions and their difficult environments, there had been no systematic approach to the recruitment and preparation of mission leaders. The Department had initially taken two steps in response to Member States' concerns: it had inaugurated a new Senior Leadership Induction Programme and undertaken a review of the selection and appointment of senior staff in cooperation with United Nations partners. The Department's goal was to create a cadre of professional field personnel supported by responsive and effective leaders. To that end, a fresh approach was needed to the recruitment, preparation and retention of staff. The Department would review conditions of service and staff mobility across the United Nations system and ensure that staff were provided with training in the core business and the standards of the Organization.

11. The second priority was to elaborate a doctrine. The experience derived from six decades of United Nations work in peacekeeping had not been systematized in a consistent, quality-controlled manner and it was increasingly important to define and articulate the issues central to United Nations peacekeeping. Many of the core questions identified in the Brahimi report remained relevant, namely: what was the meaning and practical application on the ground of terms such as "robust peacekeeping"; whether operational and administrative procedures were sufficient to meet the demands of large operations in volatile situations; whether there were clear standing responsibilities to facilitate effective interaction between diverse organizations in multidimensional missions; in what conditions was it appropriate to apply a light footprint approach; and how could United Nations peacekeeping operations play a part in delivering a rapid "peace dividend" to societies emerging from conflict. While it was appropriate to learn from the experience of others, a United Nations peacekeeping guidance framework could not be imported from elsewhere. In order to provide answers to the above questions and elaborate guidance for field personnel it was necessary to harness the operational experience of missions over the past decades. The objective was to elaborate a pragmatic operational guidance system that would reflect the knowledge and experience of United Nations peacekeepers and help the current peacekeepers to carry out their tasks effectively and safely. That guidance system would constitute the peacekeeping doctrine of the United Nations. Some progress had been made in developing a basic framework for the guidance system and it would be discussed during the forthcoming session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

12. The third priority related to partnerships. Integration had been a key issue in discussions over the past few years, and it was now time to move on to a more holistic concept of partnership. The United Nations family was undertaking an inter-agency review of the integrated mission planning process, and the results of the review would be institutionalized throughout Headquarters and in the field. The proposed establishment of a peacebuilding commission and a peacebuilding support office would require renewed drive to build a coherent system; that was one of the Secretary-General's key reform targets. Dialogue would help to articulate how the Department could support the commission and the support office in establishing and coordinating strategy and principles on the planning and conduct of activities in post-conflict countries, particularly in areas such as the rule of law, security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. In those areas the range of tasks involved, their specialized aspects, and the time required to implement change meant that no organization could address them single-handedly. The successful establishment of interagency approaches in the field of mine action and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration provided useful lessons. There was a wealth of partners outside the United Nations, and cooperation with them enabled the Organization to improve and expand support to post-conflict countries. There had been a dramatic and welcome growth in regional peacekeeping which reflected the global demand for peacekeeping and testified to the commitment of Member States to the multilateral management of peace. Predictable and effective frameworks for partnerships were required, although it was important to recognize diversity. Over the next five years it would be a priority for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to put such frameworks in place, and it would engage in an institutionalized open dialogue with external partners to discuss the goals of promoting regional peacekeeping capacity, strengthening effectiveness through targeted capacity-building, and reinforcing a collective approach to security. The immediate priority was to work in partnership with the African Union in order to take forward the endorsement by the World Summit of a 10-year capacity-building programme. A second priority was to promote cooperation in the field with the international financial institutions, in particular the World Bank.

13. The fourth priority was in the area of organization. A structure was required that would provide staff in the field with clear, responsive and accountable direction and support, would be responsive to Member States, and could work as an effective partner in integrated peace operations. The integrated team approach proposed in the Brahimi report and favoured by the Member States would have to be systematically applied across the Department. He proposed to establish fully integrated, cohesive teams at Headquarters, comprising military, police and civilian personnel, to direct and support field operations; such teams would provide a single responsive backstop for a mission and expand and contract according to the mission's needs. The

Department would provide the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations with a comprehensive indication of how the Department and field missions could be configured.

14. The fifth priority concerned resources. The goal was to better equip United Nations peacekeeping structures to use resources efficiently and to support their mandates effectively. In areas such as personnel, the most important prerequisite of reform was greater flexibility in the reallocation of existing resources. There were, however, areas in which additional resources were needed. The first was in the area of operational capacity. In March, 2005, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had requested that the concept of a standing police capacity should be developed, and the Department had collaborated closely with the Special Committee in developing a framework, which could be implemented in January 2006, subject to the approval of the budget by the relevant legislative bodies. The World Summit, which had endorsed the creation of a standing policy capacity, had also recognized the need to develop an operational capability so that existing missions would have the capacity to respond to crisis situations. The concept of a strategic reserve proposed by the Department had not met with approval, and a working group of the Special Committee was currently examining options to be submitted for further development by the Department. Discussions to date had underscored the need for a review of the United Nations Standby Arrangements System. Additional resources were also needed in the area of staff development. Over the next six months the Department would introduce an integrated training service to provide training for all military, police and civilian personnel in the field.

15. The selection of five major priority areas for development constituted an ambitious agenda. The implementation of that agenda would require a substantial commitment and must not deflect the Department from the performance of its primary obligation to support and direct current missions. The agenda represented the priorities set out at the World Summit and reflected the reform agenda of the Secretary-General. Subject to the Committee's concurrence on the broad lines of the agenda, he would return to the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations with a comprehensive implementation agenda for each of the five priorities.

16. **The Chairman** invited the Under-Secretary-General to hold an interactive dialogue with members of the Committee in closed session immediately after the adjournment of the meeting.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.